

Dear Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

Thank you for holding this hearing on an issue of extreme importance to me and to the working people of our state.

My name is Tiana Hercules and I serve as a Councilwoman for the City of Hartford. I'm here to stand in support of **HB 5353 - An Act Concerning a Fair Work Schedule**. This bill would stabilize the lives of countless Connecticut workers by ensuring that their employers treat their work, their time, and their families with the respect that all people deserve.

Today I speak not only as a Hartford Councilwoman but as a working mother. My family's needs go beyond me putting food on the table. My children, like all children, need their mother to be present, healthy, and financially stable in order for them to continue to grow and prosper. But an unpredictable work shift makes planning for the future, scheduling child-care, figuring out transportation, and budgeting incredibly difficult when you never know if, or how much, work you will receive for the week. When an employer doesn't respect your time or your humanity, it takes a toll on your family life, and your physical and mental health. These are the conditions that nearly 350,000 Connecticut hourly service workers are subjected to, and even more troubling is that they often feel pressured to tolerate the unpredictable shift changes out of fear of losing their jobs or not being called for additional hours.

It does not need to be this way. As an entrepreneur and a criminal defense attorney, I have successfully managed many individuals in my professional career, and I know that a consistent and fair schedule is not too much to ask of an employer – particularly not the large employers covered under this proposed legislation. Throughout this pandemic, we have expected Connecticut workers to rise and meet the challenges of re-building and running our society, the least that we can guarantee for them is the security of a good faith schedule given to them in advance. The least we can do for ourselves as a state is to build an economy that creates good, stable jobs, rather than unreliable and exploitative part-time positions. When we allow large employers to shirk their simple responsibility of

providing clear hours and advance notice to their employees, the employees are only the first to suffer. In the long run, without a Fair Work Week policy for Connecticut, we all lose.

Therefore I am calling on you as committee members to join me in fighting for our families, for our public health, for our economy, and most of all for the idea that all people deserve dignity and security in their place of work.

Thanks for your time, and I'm happy to take any questions.

Tiana Hercules
Hartford City Councilwoman